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Before the
FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
Washington, D.C. 20554

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of)
)
1998 Biennial Regulatory Review --) CS Docket No. 98-132
Streamlining of Cable Television Services)
Part 76 Public File and Notice Requirements)

REPLY COMMENTS OF AMERITECH

Ameritech New Media, Inc. ("Ameritech"), hereby replies to the comments filed on September 10, 1998, with respect to the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking ("NPRM") in the above-captioned proceeding.¹

As expected, the Commission's proposals in the NPRM to reorganize and consolidate the Part 76 public file, notice and record keeping requirements elicited broad support from the cable industry. A majority of the parties filing comments in this proceeding also supported the Commission's efforts to seek alternative ways to make public file information available to the public. Specifically, many commenters urged the Commission to permit cable operators to make information available to the public upon request, rather than having to maintain multiple public inspection files. Ameritech supports these proposals, which fulfill the Commission's goal of streamlining and improving its rules under Part 76 in ways that will enhance public participation in the enforcement process while reducing the regulatory burden on cable operators.

Ameritech is filing these Reply Comments to respond briefly to MediaOne's opposition to the Commission's proposal to grant operators the "option" of posting public

¹1998 Biennial Regulatory Review -- Streamlining of Cable Television Services Part 76 Public File and Notice Requirements, CS Docket. No. 98-132, FCC 98-159 (rel. July 20, 1998) ("NPRM").

file information on the Internet.² MediaOne expresses concern that, rather than reducing a cable operator's administrative burdens, this proposal would actually increase those burdens by forcing cable operators not only to maintain paper records, but also to expend substantial time and resources to create and maintain an Internet web site.³

To be sure, many small, and perhaps even some large, cable operators may not be able to afford, or would not choose, to create a company web site and post information on the Internet. Such entities should be permitted to maintain a paper public file and should not be forced to upgrade to new technologies. However, those companies that have the capability and choose to post information electronically should be permitted to do so.⁴

MediaOne's further concern that many members of the public do not have ready access to the Internet is unfounded. In amending the public file requirements for broadcast television and radio stations, the Commission determined that public files available over the Internet can be accessed from homes, schools and libraries, thereby greatly increasing the number of sites where such information can be viewed.⁵ Based on this determination, the Commission granted broadcasters the option of maintaining all or

² *NPRM* at para. 5.

³ Comments of MediaOne, CS Docket No. 98-132, filed Sept. 10, 1998, at 9-10. MediaOne reads the Commission's statement that persons who do not have access to the appropriate technology to access the internet must continue to have the information available to them as suggesting that cable operators would have to maintain both an internet and manual (paper) solution. *Id.* at 10.

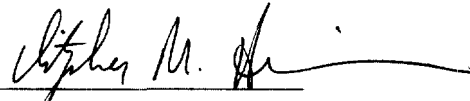
⁴ While Ameritech recognizes that the Commission may want to ensure that certain information is available to the public at all times, certain other information should only have to be made available upon request (such as information concerning the technical operation of the cable system, and the EAS). With regard to the latter type of information, even where an operator chooses to establish and maintain a web site, it should not be required to post such information.

⁵ *Review of the Commission's Rules Regarding the Main Studio and Local Public Inspection Files of Broadcast Television and Radio Stations, Report and Order*, MM Docket No. 97-138, FCC 98-175, at par. 21 (rel. Aug. 11, 1998) ("*Broadcast Order*").

part of their public file in a computer database, rather than in paper files, and encouraged licensees to post their public files on their Internet web sites. Ameritech urges the Commission to grant cable operators the same flexibility to utilize electronic public files, where feasible, in lieu of a paper public inspection file.⁶

For the reasons set forth above, and in its earlier-filed Comments, Ameritech supports the adoption of rules to consolidate and streamline the Part 76 public file, notice and record keeping requirements, and to grant cable operators the option of posting public file information on the Internet.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Christopher M. Heimann", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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September 25, 1998

⁶ See also Comments of the Cable Telecommunications Assn., CS Docket No. 98-132, filed Sept. 10, 1998, at 2 (supporting grant of an option to cable operators to make public file information available on the Internet).

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I, Anisa A. Latif, do hereby certify that a copy of the Reply Comments of Ameritech has been served on the parties attached via courier or first class mail – postage prepaid, on this 25th day of September 1998.

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